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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 1 November 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We write today to express our grave concern about the military escalation undertaken by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Gaza Strip. Over the past four days, Israeli air strikes have killed at least 11 Palestinians and injured scores. This has included Israel's carrying out of extrajudicial executions, which are strictly prohibited under international law. This escalation, initiated by Israel, the occupying Power, in an air strike that killed five Palestinians on 29 October 2011, triggered a serious deterioration in the situation on the ground. In this regard, we express our gratitude to the Arab Republic of Egypt for its efforts to reinstate calm and stop Israel from carrying out a full-fledged aggression against the besieged Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip.

Moreover, we affirm our position that one-sided statements and comments on this escalation are neither helpful nor acceptable. The deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip is due first and foremost to the fact that Israel, the occupying Power, continues to violate its obligations under international law and maintains an inhumane and brutal blockade of the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. On a daily basis, Israel violates the most basic rights, including the right to life, education, livelihood and housing, and countless other fundamental rights of over 1.5 million Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. Israel continues to act with abject disregard of international law and the obligations it outlines for occupying Powers, which Israel remains with its perpetuation of its now 44-year occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Palestinian leadership has urged all Palestinian factions to act responsibly and to advance the interests of the Palestinian people by maintaining calm in the Gaza Strip and respecting international law. However, this principled position does not absolve Israel of its responsibilities as an occupying Power, nor does it excuse its acts of aggression and violence. In this regard, we note with alarm the repeated calls by senior Israeli government officials, including Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, for a full-scale aggression and ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, in

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addition to repeated hostile declarations and incitement against the Palestinian people and their leadership. Here, we stress our alarm at such open calls for unchecked violence and aggression like those wrought on the Gaza Strip during Israel's brutal war three years ago. We need not remind you that during this war, which caused thousands of deaths and injuries, decimated Gaza's infrastructure and destroyed over 20 per cent of the Strip's buildings, Israel repeatedly violated international humanitarian law and committed acts that amount to war crimes, and here we recall the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and stress the need for serious follow-up to ensure accountability for the crimes committed against the Palestinian civilian population. Consequently, we call on you to respond firmly to such threats of war and remind Israel of its responsibilities as an occupying Power.

In this connection, we would like to reaffirm that the only source of conflict and violence remains the ongoing Israeli military occupation, which continues to deny the Palestinian people their most basic rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. As Israel, the occupying Power, maintains an illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip and continues to pound it with bombs, it also maintains its brutal grip on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly Occupied East Jerusalem, as it continues to pursue illegal and destructive practices. Yesterday, 31 October 2011, Israel, the occupying Power, demolished several homes and structures housing at least 21 Palestinians in the Al-Khan Al-Ahmar area, which has been the target of the continued expansion of the illegal settlement "Maale Adumim". The area's only kindergarten is also threatened with demolition. We reiterate that only an end to this brutal military occupation can stop, once and for all, this persistent state of rising tensions, despair and bloodshed.

In this regard, we welcome the resounding victory for the collective will of the international community, represented by the majority, for Palestine's application for UNESCO membership. This overwhelming, positive vote is actually a vote of support of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to self-determination. We consider this vote a historic development that brings us closer to a future of justice and peace in the region, in line with the principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 408 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 26 October 2011 (A/ES-10/536-S/2011/665), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations